

# 2026 Phillips 66 Big 12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

**BYU Cougars**

**Coach Kevin Young**

**Kennard Davis Jr.**

**AJ Dybantsa**

Postgame Press Conference



that to get out and contest a lot of their shots to hold them to that number.

**Q. How has your identity changed in the last 10 days, from West Virginia now until this game, especially with Khadim and Diomande in the lineup and the defense they had?**

KEVIN YOUNG: Those two guys are dogs naturally. So I think it inspires these two with the rest of the group. But we had a moment where we had to just -- I personally had to look myself in the mirror after that East Coast trip. It was the trifecta. It was the UCF game and then the trip out east against Cinci and West Virginia.

And it was a dark moment for our season. I just had to figure out -- we have too much talent. Let's figure this out even without Richie.

We took it back to the basics and we just dumbed it down with our defense, got a lot less coachy and a lot more just do it harder, longer, stronger, faster and kept it real simple. And our guys have really taken to that, led by these two tonight.

And not just these two, but I thought what Keba does, what Dom has given us, what Khadim -- I thought Beto (phonetic) came in tonight and Rob's playing with a busted mouth and so forth. So just the toughness that we've found over the last 10 days has really been the difference.

**Q. AJ, I noticed that in just your technique when you drive, you hold the ball kind of high in the air, as opposed to some players keep it low. Where does that come from in your training? And, Coach, how much do you entrust for him to take 24 shots and just continue to lead this team all season?**

AJ DYBANTSA: With me, when I was younger I used to get the ball stolen a lot in the post because I would just dribble it so low. And I was taller than a lot of guys, and a lot of guys would just crawl in there and get their hands on it. So just trying to keep it high, away from guys because I'm taller than a lot of guys and just raise up and shoot.

BYU - 68, West Virginia - 48

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Coach Young and student-athletes AJ Dybantsa and Kennard Davis Jr.

KEVIN YOUNG: Hard-fought game. West Virginia is a team that plays extremely hard. Well-coached team. Coach Hodge has done a great job being a first year coach in this league, this is a hard league. He's done a great job in his first year.

We just played them 10 days ago, and we felt like we left a lot to be desired in that game. I thought our guys came out with the 40-minute effort that had a will to win that was kind of unmatched. And I thought you saw it in a lot of different areas as far as the rebounding and how active our defense was. I thought our defense was tremendous tonight, arguably the best it's been all year.

So it was definitely something that we can look at moving forward as a benchmark for how good our defense can be.

**Q. Coach, your defense held West Virginia to just 2-of-12 from the 3 in that second half. What were you seeing from your team defensively that was making that such a struggle for them?**

KEVIN YOUNG: Just effort, honestly, I thought our rotations were -- we just challenged our guys to do things stronger, longer, harder, faster, more, right? That's really it. So that's what we saw tonight.

We've opened up our rotation, just given the situation we're in with injuries that we've had, and a lot of the guys that we bring in off the bench are really good athletes, have great length, and we've been able, tonight we were able to use



KEVIN YOUNG: My son now mimics him. So my son's doing the high pick up.

Yes, of course, I trust him. I think he's the best player in college basketball. And I think he proves it every single night. This guy brings it on both ends of the floor.

And then what's great is he's able to find guys like Moo. You know, Moo's been taking really good shots, making huge shots for us. And AJ's trust, and my trust in AJ is really rooted on, one, how talented he is, but, two, his decision-making and his processing.

That's what I said when I first really started to work with AJ was you know, like, when I came when I left the NBA to come to college, one thing I noticed is just a lot of guys, their processing speed is way slower. His is extremely high.

So I can tell him something in the game or in a film session and he's going to carry it over. Even tonight when he hit a few of those cuts on the back cuts of the post doubles, I mean, that's not something we've really done all year. But we've fallen into it based on who we're playing.

You know the trust I have for him is unmatched. And the trust that he has in his teammates, led by the guy he's sitting next to, is part of the reason why, to your question, why the tide's turning for our team.

**Q. Moo, you had a great game tonight, but not only tonight, but the last three games, all double-digit scoring. Just what's working so well for you right now with your shots, seeing the ball, all that?**

KENNARD DAVIS JR.: I would say just let my defense turn into offense. Obviously Coach put me in a good spot. My teammates trusting me, that's what I would say is it's led with defense.

**Q. AJ, what do you feel worked pretty well for you tonight offensively? And, Coach, any early thoughts on the upcoming matchup against Houston?**

AJ DYBANTSA: Just staying aggressive. Last time we were up in West Virginia I think I was a little passive. Then they started calling into me sending me into double teams, and I was kind of get rallied up, turnovers. So me just trying to stay aggressive and keep them on their toes.

KEVIN YOUNG: In terms of Houston, great respect for their program and what Coach Sampson's been able to build there. It's pretty remarkable what they've been able to do. I love playing his team because you've got to have

the toughness that's required, like what we had tonight, because that's how those guys play.

But they're super aggressive defensively. I thought we played a really good game actually against them at home. We left money on the table. I think we missed 12 free throws in that game, which is a really back-and-forth, really tightly contested game.

It will be fun to go out there -- you want to play against the best, and they've had a track record we're trying to get to where they have been for a long time. And we played them in this tournament last year, learned a ton from that game that I think helped us even prepare for them in our first match-up. So we're really looking forward to it.

**Q. Kennard, I think you've made nine of your last 11 3-point attempts, and obviously the last three games you've been fantastic. What changed? Was it Coach talking about giving you more confidence? What changed with your game where you're playing your best ball of the season?**

KENNARD DAVIS JR.: Obviously I was in a slump in the season. Coaches kept trusting me, telling me, do something else to get going, go get an offensive rebound or get an assist. I feel like they helped me out a lot.

**Q. The fanfare of the Big 12 is such a big tournament. Chiefs head coach Andy Reid sitting right on the sideline, and Patrick Mahomes in the crowd. Do you see any of that? Did you kind of want to dap up Andy Reid? Any thoughts about just seeing them in the crowd today?**

KEVIN YOUNG: I'll take it. Yeah, I dapped Coach Reid before the game. He's a great guy. I've been able to chat with him a little since I've taken this job. It was awesome seeing him court side.

But just in general, I've said this before, this is an amazing, very well-run tournament. The city of Kansas City does a phenomenal job. I love this arena. It's super nice. The Big 12 deserves a lot of credit for it. It just feels like a big-time event. I'm happy that we could be in it and continue to play in it. But in terms of seeing, like, the who's who in the crowd, it's awesome.

AJ DYBANTSA: I dapped up Coach Reid at the end of the game. I didn't know he was sitting there. And I didn't know Patrick Mahomes was there until they put him on the big screen, which is kind of cool.

KENNARD DAVIS JR.: I didn't see either one. I was locked in.

**Q. You've won three in a row, first time in close to two months that's happened. How does this environment -- how does it help foster kind of getting a little bit of your groove back without Richie?**

KEVIN YOUNG: Yeah, I talked about it before. I feel like we've had kind of three iterations of the season: The team we thought we were going to have and then we had some injuries, and then we just go with Richie and that team, and now he's out of the mix and the team we have now.

So I think it's this current identity that our group's playing with, I think, is extremely timely obviously but it's obviously much needed as well to give the guys confidence that we can play really good basketball with the guys in our locker room right now that are healthy.

And it's fun. It's fun. It's fun to be around and see a team come together like that.

**Q. You're going to play your third game in three days on this particular floor. Houston is going to play its first game against you on the floor. Do you think you have something of a little bit of an advantage to start off since you've had experience with that and they are not going to have that?**

KENNARD DAVIS JR.: Yeah, you could say that obviously we're kind of warm. We are having good games. We are used to the hoops. The hoop's kind of tight. The court has the LED lights. I'm kind of used to it now. I think we'll be prepared for it.

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